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A Travesty Upon Secrecy

The recent performance of the Central Intelligence Agency in the Cuban patriots' abortive uprising against Fidel Castro serves, it seems, to emphasize a glaring weakness in the entire United States intelligence system.

We wonder how many Americans—outside of certain government officials—can name the heads of the Russian, British, French or even the West German espionage organizations? How many know the actual title of these services or where their headquarters are located? In these countries and in the remainder of the world, however, any informed person surely knows that Allen W. Dulles directs the CIA.

Since its inception, CIA has made a rather ridiculous effort to maintain secrecy by trying to cloak its employees in anonymity. CIA members are forbidden to disclose their connection with the agency, yet almost everyone in Washington has a friend who works for CIA. At one time, if a CIA employee needed to give the address of his office, he could do so by street number only without identifying the agency. Yet, the Congressional Directory lists both the agency name and address and the high-

way leading to the new CIA building at Langley, Va., is plainly marked with "To CIA," signs.

Now we do not contend that more secrecy as to staff members—including the director—and to actual location of agency offices would prevent such fiascos as the Cuban episode. That matter appears to be one that might be cured only by a solid shakeup within the CIA. But, the fact that CIA is so much in the public view, through excessive publicity, contributes nothing to a sound espionage operation.

This is not to imply that the CIA should be permitted to operate carte blanche and be completely unaccountable to the people. Congress is the watchdog over all federal business and it is amply equipped to maintain control over CIA when necessary. Congress can see to it that CIA does not become a monolith, but it can perform this function in a way that will give the agency a better chance in the field of international intelligence.

Spying is, by its very nature, perforce a secret operation. If this country is to compete with the nations that adhere to this concept, it must cover itself properly.